

ADE DAILY NEWS CLIPS

April 30, 2013

NLRPD: Two school buses collide on 67/167, injuries possible (KATV, Channel 7)

NORTH LITTLE ROCK (KATV) - North Little Rock Police confirm at least three injuries after two school buses crashed Tuesday morning.

Sgt. Brian Dedrick said the accident happened at the McCain exit on Highway 67/167. The North Little Rock School District tells KATV two school buses from Batesville School District collided.

Dollarway superintendent to step down; 12 teaching spots are cut (Pine Bluff Commercial)

Dollarway School District Superintendent Frank Anthony will end his service to the district at the conclusion of the current academic year, he confirmed Monday.

Anthony also confirmed that the school district will not renew the contracts of eight full-time teachers for the next academic year. Four other teaching positions that would be open at the end of this school year will not be filled.

Anthony submitted his letter of resignation dated April 24 and effective June 30 to Arkansas Department of Education Commissioner Tom Kimbrell last week.

In the letter Anthony cites a desire to spend more time with his grandchildren and the rest of his immediate family as the primary reason for his planned departure.

"After much thought, prayer and deliberation I have decided to step down as superintendent effective June 30, 2013," Anthony said in his letter to Kimbrell. "I have made a conscious choice to reorganize my life to ensure that I have more quality time with my immediate family, especially with my grandchildren. Additionally I am anxious to refresh and refine my fishing skills."

"It's been a tough year because of the challenges we've faced," Anthony said in a Monday afternoon conversation at the district administration building. "We've welcomed them and have been presented with a bunch of opportunities. One of the biggest problems I have encountered is the inability to recruit the number of qualified teachers that are needed."

Anthony points out several areas of progress made during his tenure with the school district.

"We have put into place fundamental foundation steps which will improve the district both financially and academically for the upcoming years," Anthony said.

Fully accredited

"For the first year in a long while the Arkansas Department of Education fully accredited all five schools in the Dollarway School District for the 2012-2013 school year," Anthony said. "The reason for the state takeover of this district last year was Dollarway High School being found in probationary status for two consecutive years. This year the high school was found to be in compliance and is accredited."

Anthony provided a copy of the ADE Standards Annual Accreditation Report documenting the findings of the Standards Assurance body.

"This is a foundation for future success," Anthony said. "It is confirmation that the district is taking the right first steps but there is still much to be done in the district."

RIF

Anthony said Monday that he worked with officials in the ADE to implement the district's reduction-in-force plan for the purpose of adjusting the teacher-to-student ratio to acknowledge the continuing drop in overall enrollment.

"State law required that we complete the notification process for all certified personnel who are being affected by the reduction in force by May 1 and we have done that," Anthony said. "At the elementary level we will eliminate six full-time equivalent certified positions through RIF and another two positions are being eliminated through natural attrition. At the middle school level we will eliminate two certified positions through RIF and an additional two positions through attrition. There were no high school level positions eliminated through RIF but one position is being eliminated through attrition. There will be \$500,000 give or take less in teacher salaries as a result of the elimination of these positions."

Alzheimer-Martin

Anthony said that his recommendation to Kimbrell that Alzheimer-Martin Elementary School be closed at the end of the current school year was formally approved last week.

"As of June 30 Alzheimer-Martin Elementary will cease to function as a K-5 instructional facility," Anthony said.

ABC

The district preschool program has entered a period of uncertainty, according to Anthony, because of a failure in previous years to keep the proper records for documenting the number of children at free and reduced lunch status.

"The program is funded through Arkansas Better Chance," Anthony said. "Normally the funding is automatically rolled over into the next school year but because there was inadequate documentation for the program the program was placed in competitive status. That means that our preschool program is competing for funding with about 25 other programs."

Anthony said that because of the uncertainty over funding for next year the eight teachers and 12 para-professionals employed by the program were placed in non-renew status.

"The earliest that word on funding will come is the June meeting of the state board of education but it could be July," Anthony said. "We submitted the grant application on time so now we are waiting. As soon as the funding is approved the 20 employees of the program will be brought back."

Anthony said the grant funding amounts to \$631,000.

Tireless

Anthony said that he will continue to do what he was hired to do right up to the end.

"I have two more months here after tomorrow," Anthony said. "I believe in going to the finish line. I won't let up until midnight on June 30."

Step Up, Stop Bullying, Part One (KLRT, Fox 16)

Video available at <http://www.fox16.com/news/local/story/Step-Up-Stop-Bullying-Part-One/-mAOvU-ykUKITksqp583qq.csp>

MAUMELLE, AR- Bullying has been around for generations, but thanks to technology, with a single push of the button or a click of the mouse, the impact is far more reaching.

Case in point: Did you know that 160-thousand students skip school each day due to peer cruelty.

Another study shows 80-percent of middle school students admit to bullying behavior in just the past 30 days.

Bullying now affects one-in-five children worldwide.

The numbers are sad and the repercussions can be destructive.

Here, now, is the first in a series of reports entitled Step Up, Stop Bullying.

The goal is to show you what is being done at local schools to cut down on a crime that makes no sense.

We begin at Maumelle High School.

In spite of signs that say "No Bullying", it happens.

"I myself have been a victim of cyber bullying," says one student.

"Bullying is a prevalent thing in the schools," says another.

Stronger still, "I've actually experienced people actually committing suicide over bullying," says a third student.

Strong reactions from students across Central Arkansas, all too familiar with the dangers of bullying.

At Maumelle High School, one student is on a mission.

Two years ago, Rebecca Aguilera started the "Better Safe Than Sorry" program.

The goal is to teach kids of all ages how to be safe on the internet, and about the dangers of cyber-bullying.

Rebecca Aguilera say, "People don't realize that what you put on there can really hurt someone."

Using Facebook, Twitter, even My Space, Rebecca spreads the word, teaching kids what is safe to post and what is not.

She hopes victims get help before it is too late.

Rebecca says, "What if one day they just get pushed to the limit and they they're not here the next... and that's what scares me the most. "Her passion along with her program took off, and now she is taking it on the road.

Over the past two years she has visited 16 schools and won numerous awards.

The impact is evident in statements like this one, from an eighth-grader, "I never realized that what I was doing could lead to such extreme consequences."

Rebecca Aguilera says: "Kids need to know that what they're posting and who they're talking to or who they're friends with is crucial and they need to know how to be safe. "

With requests pouring in, she asks other students who share the same passion, preventing cyber-bullying, to join her program.

Sarah Eubanks says, "We jut want people to realize how far their comments on Facebook or their tweets on Twitter can go.

They might not mean to hurt the other persons feelings that bad, but once you say it... you can't take it back."

Rachel Williams, "They don't really understand how hurtful words can be to people and they really don't understand the consequences of posting something rude to someone."

All three have seen the hurtful words, and heard the cries for help.

"We want them to go tell their teacher or their mom, or their dad or their guardian. We want them to tell an adult so they can get the help that they need," says Sarah Eubanks.

The reality is that fear, along with possible repercussions, prevent some victims from reaching out.

So Rebecca, Sarah, and Rachel march forward, focused and determined to spread their message.

Rachel Williams says, "If one person gets it... that's awesome because that means we might have possibly changed somebody's life or we might have helped them."

Parents Ask District To Save Science Labs From Cuts (KARK, Channel 4)

Video available at http://arkansasmatters.com/fulltext?nxd_id=658092

That's why parents in Russellville said they're livid the district is considering scaling back science programs as a way to deal with cut-backs.

The superintendent for the district said what's been started is just a conversation.

After the legislator began talks of pulling funds that total \$1.4 million.

Trisha Ford's first grader Skyler has his eyes opened every day he gets to go to the science lab at Center Valley Elementary in Russellville.

"He comes home and he's pretty sure he knows more about everything than we do to do with science," she laughed.

A sort of pet project for the district's superintendent, seven years ago Randall Williams watched the program grow from its inception to where it is today.

The school has really embraced STEM initiatives," he said. "Our district has and I'm very proud of that."

Recently however the district has met with science lab teachers about the possibility of ending the program.

We haven't made a decision on anything yet but we are certainly having to look at our options.

Us parents aren't happy about it.

I'm a parent and I don't want that to happen," said Tonya Samuels. "I think they should be able to tighten it somewhere other than science."

The school will by no means cut science out of schools all together, but that's not comforting to these moms.

I understand they'll still get the science, but it won't be the same and the district said these cuts won't happen overnight.

We may not even see the effects for a couple years.

"He'll be in kindergarten next year," said Ford of her younger son.

These moms said they're not only thinking about their children but are concerned what the future generations could be missing out on.

Williams said it's nice to see parents so passionate about their students education and he's going to try his best to make sure their voices are heard.

We may know something as far as a decision goes as early as next week.